

Dreams are about to become a reality with Phase 1 of the façade renovation of the Park Theatre! This rendering is the look the Park Theatre will have when it's original 1940's façade is completed. The bid was awarded to MSB Construction of Jackson, TN. MSB began construction on the interior February 11, 2014. The outside of this project will be on hold until the latter part of March due to procurement of the Vitrolite. If you remember how the Park Theatre looked in its heyday, you will recall the rectangular, shimmering panels of black and white. Vitrolite is a perfect reflector of whatever sits near them – including sky and sun. They hearken back to the architectural trends of their era of origin.

A little history lesson on Vitrolite. It is three-eighths of an inch thick, and is a one-of-a-kind material. It was first manufactured in the 1910s and used as industrial tiling until it was featured at an art expo in Paris in 1925 and caught the eye of American designers and architects. Throughout the next three decades, owners of department stores, movie theaters, jewelers and pharmacies alike clamored to incorporate the colorful tiles into their facades.

By 1950, however, Vitrolite no longer was manufactured. Trends marched on, and the glass paneling became harder and harder to get.

Today, the material is kept alive by historic buildings like the Park Theatre and a man named Timothy Dunn – the self-proclaimed world expert on the unique tiles that helped compose many American downtowns.

"The stuff just twinkles," said Dunn, an Omaha native who has been installing and maintaining Vitrolite for more than 25 years. "I see this as one way of helping establish our downtowns. It's part of what I am," he said. You will have the privilege of seeing Mr. Dunn in late March or early April as he applies Vitrolite to the Park Theatre.

This renovation is due to the LPRF grant we received the later part of 2012. The grant includes the construction of a Disc Golf course, which is already under construction and will have its ribbon cutting in early 2014. A skateboard park will become a reality as well early in 2014.

